



# Strategic Plan

## 2020-2025



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## Why Social Justice Ireland?

Today, we are standing at one of the most important junctures in Irish history. After years of austerity, our recent economic growth masks growing levels of injustice and inequality.

As the digital revolution changes the nature of work, one in every six Irish people currently lives in poverty. Our housing crisis is growing deeper and the gap between those who have and those who never had, widens every day. Our health system is overwhelmed with thousands on waiting lists and all across the country our rural communities are in constant decline.

Meanwhile minority groups still have to fight to protect their most basic rights and each day more and more people become disillusioned and distrustful of our institutions and systems of government.

In Ireland, and across the world, anger and fear have led to a rise in the dark spectres of bigotry and extremism, while every day we continue to blindly ignore our commitment to protect our environment and save our future.

Justice, equality and inclusion are not simply an aspiration. They are absolute necessities.

Protecting those core values is the key focus of *Social Justice Ireland* and all of the visionary leaders for Social Justice who support us.

*Social Justice Ireland* is dedicated to tackling the root causes of injustice in our society with independent, verifiable, evidence-based fact.

Through a mixture of authoritative research, rigorous analysis of government policy and the development of fully-tested and fully-costed initiatives, *Social Justice Ireland* identifies the root causes of inequality and injustice and offers effective and lasting solutions to those problems.

Most importantly, our work is independent, transparent and free from outside influence or political agenda.

*Social Justice Ireland* interrogates, informs and inspires every section of our government, our institutions and our communities, enabling the choices we make about our society to be made in a more deliberative process.

Armed with the forensic research and analysis provided by *Social Justice Ireland*, issues and positions can be argued and discussed based on the available evidence rather than based on assertions of those who happen to be powerful.

*Social Justice Ireland's* work is designed specifically to ensure that the choices society makes are rooted in the core values of justice, equality and inclusion and are based on the rigorous application of evidence-based research.

This careful and meticulous approach is not just the most effective way of ensuring justice and equality in our society.

It is the only way. It is the *Social Justice Ireland* way.

## Social Justice Ireland 2020 - 2025

*Social Justice Ireland* is one of the leading voices championing a more just, fair and equal society. It is an entirely independent research and policy development think-tank.

Our singular, painstaking and relentless focus on justice and equality has enabled *Social Justice Ireland* to become one of the most powerful and trusted forces for social change in modern Irish history.

The way Irish people live and work and support ourselves and care for our families, are all changing rapidly. The exponential advancement of technology is triggering a seismic shift in work patterns.

The traditional social contract upon which we have built our society is becoming redundant. Allied to this, rapid globalisation, the uncertainty flowing from Brexit and the rise of populist nationalism across Europe and the world, has left Ireland in a very unstable political climate in a post-COVID 19 world.

All the while the threat to our environment – and indeed our very survival – grows with every passing day.

Over the next five critical years, the decisions we take and the way in which we respond to these challenges will shape the future of our country. At this unparalleled period of change and confusion we now have the opportunity to shape the society we want for ourselves and for future generations.

For many years *Social Justice Ireland* has been a leading bulwark against injustice and a force for progressive change in Ireland. Through forensic research, tireless advocacy and by diligently holding successive governments to account, *Social Justice Ireland* has worked to protect the rights of the most vulnerable in our society and helped to shape the country we have today. This work takes on an added urgency as we face into the challenging period ahead.

## Our Values

*Social Justice Ireland* is an organisation which envisages a just and sustainable society where human rights are respected, human dignity is upheld, human development is promoted and the environment is respected and protected.

*Social Justice Ireland* understands justice as a harmony that comes from fidelity to right relationships between people, institutions and the environment.

## Our Mission

We work to build a just and sustainable society.

We do this by:

- **Researching** to produce coherent, independent, evidence-based social analysis which:
  - identifies policy pathways towards a just and sustainable society,
  - addresses the structural causes of injustice, whether these be economic, political, cultural or social, and
  - promotes core societal values of human dignity, sustainability, equality, human rights and the common good.
- **Communicating** our analysis and that of others, to inform the public, academia and politics, and to advocate for a just and sustainable society across all relevant local, national and international public policy areas.
- **Empowering** other societal actors, by facilitating initiatives and working in partnership with citizens, organisations and institutions which share our goals, whether in Ireland, the EU or globally.
- **Organising** a modern, efficient, financially sustainable, and regulatory compliant charitable organisation.

## Our Values

In carrying out our work we will adhere to the following values:

- **Excellence:** We will be a centre of excellence, credible and effective in all that we do.
- **Leadership:** We will be visionary about an achievable sustainable future, unwavering in pursuit of our goals, while remaining responsive and adaptive to the evolution of the political, policy or public opinion environment.
- **Collaboration:** We will engage and respond in a spirit of dialogue with all societal actors. We will speak in a language appropriate to particular audiences, and draw on the work and experience of our members.
- **Independence:** We will be independent in our mission, research and analysis of policy.

## Our Achievements

### Independent Research and Trusted Analysis

Our reports, papers, books and other research output have provided independent and in-depth analysis on critical social issues and identified options for moving towards a fairer future.

### Awareness Raising

Our communication and advocacy work has ensured that the public is kept informed of changes to policy that directly affect them.

### Informing Decision Makers

Our experts have offered evidence and new ideas to decision-makers and policy shapers on how problem areas could best be tackled from the immediate to the long term.

### Advocacy

We have worked extensively including within the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to highlight social injustices both in Ireland and internationally.

### Combating Poverty and inequality

*Social Justice Ireland* succeeded in getting social welfare payments linked to average industrial earnings. As a result, Ireland's poorest received an additional €2 billion per year in social welfare payments during the recession.

### Building Communities

*Social Justice Ireland* has led the development of the Public Participation Networks (PPNs). Today over 15,000 organisations are members of PPNs throughout all 31 Local Authorities.

### Solving Homelessness

In 2016 research by *Social Justice Ireland* enabled Government to access an additional €1 billion to be spent tackling the structural causes of Ireland's social housing and homelessness problems. More recently our work on cost rental approaches has been central to progressive policy development.

### Securing our Future

Pioneering research by *Social Justice Ireland* has clearly demonstrated how a Universal State Pension could be introduced in Ireland and be fully funded for the next 40 years and beyond.

### Revolutionising the Health System

In 2002, the Irish Government accepted a proposal developed by *Social Justice Ireland* to pilot 5 primary health care teams. The success of the proposal means that there are now over 500 primary care teams across Ireland.

### Protecting our National Interest and the Common Good

In the 'bail out' years that followed the financial collapse of 2008, *Social Justice Ireland* played a central role in Ireland's dealings with the Troika. During our regular meetings over a number of years, *Social Justice Ireland* was successful in substantially altering the IMF team's analysis of Ireland's case.

## Our Key External Priorities 2020-2025

Working with other organisations, *Social Justice Ireland* aims to create a new society and economy that respects people and the environment. Key challenges we propose to address include:

### On a New Social Contract

To protect the vulnerable and develop a better future for all by developing a new Social Contract more appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and by promoting a Just Transition.

### On a Green New Deal

To reduce the carbon we emit and massively boost nature, while creating a new generation of jobs through a Green New Deal with large-scale, government-led investment.

### On Health

To build a fair healthcare system by expanding the primary care system and fully implementing Sláintecare.

### On Housing

To end homelessness and inadequate housing by developing cost efficient methods of providing affordable and appropriate accommodation for all.

### On Poverty and the Living Wage

To end poverty by revising our welfare and tax systems and developing methods of providing every person with a sustainable income.

### On the Environment

To protect the future of our environment by developing and promoting a circular economy and ensuring the Sustainable Development Goals underpin all policy.

### On Protecting Rural Communities

To regenerate rural areas by developing strategies for viable and sustainable communities.

### On Equality Through Participation

To ensure equality by enabling and promoting greater involvement through forums such as the nationwide Public Participation Networks (PPNs).

## Our Key Internal Priorities 2020-2025

- To secure sufficient finance to ensure we can roll out our plans for 2020-2025 and beyond.
- To develop a new communications strategy focused on increasing our impact on policy and being the 'go to' voice on justice.
- To strengthen our engagement in developing regional and rural policy.
- To play a greater role in the emerging focus on a Just Transition
- To produce an annual report setting out what we have achieved under our various goals.

## Our Goals for 2020-2025

**Goal 1: To play an active part in the national public policy formation process by preparing and presenting feasible policy proposals consistent with a just and sustainable society.**

For the duration of this strategic plan the framework underlying our analysis will be the following:

<b>A Vibrant Economy</b>	<b>Decent services</b>	<b>Just taxation</b>	<b>Good governance</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
Fiscal and Financial Stability and Sustainable Economic Growth	Secure services and social infrastructure	A Tax take closer to EU average	Deliberative democracy & PPNs	Increased environmental protection and climate justice
Reduced precarious employment / unemployment & underemployment	Adequate Public Investment	Increase equity in taxation and reduce income inequality	Social dialogue – all sectors in deliberative process	Balanced regional development
A more just economic structure	Ensure seven Social, Economic and Cultural rights are achieved	Secure fair share of corporate profits for the State	Reformed Policy and Budget Evaluation	New indicators of progress and new Satellite National Accounts

### To achieve this goal, we will:

- Underpin policy proposals with robust, evidence-based research.
- Undertake, commission and tender for high quality research, which adds to the evidence base at a national and international level.
- Research and publish an annual *Socio-Economic Review*, an annual *National Social Monitor* and regular *Policy Briefings* on relevant topics.
- Lead a Budget project which includes the *ex ante* analysis and *ex post* critique of Government's annual Budget.
- Organise an annual social policy conference on a relevant topic with broad participation from across a wide range of sectors.
- Engage with Government and other relevant bodies on policy issues as appropriate.



- Maintain representation on a range of public bodies as appropriate.
- Facilitate events in support of these strategic objectives.
- Play a greater role in the emerging focus on a Just Transition

**Goal 2: To communicate our analysis to Government, Opposition, Social Partners, policy makers, the media, Churches, the EU and the general public to achieve changes in policies, programmes and behaviours which impact on poverty, inequality, social exclusion, sustainability and related issues and help to build a just society.**

**To achieve this goal, we will:**

- Be an effective, coherent, credible and respected voice in all that we do.
- Present an achievable message in language that can be espoused by others.
- Develop campaigns around achievable outcomes.
- Continue to publish policy analysis through a range of media, from academic publications, to social media platforms, podcasts, appearances on national and local media on topical issues.
- Refine and resource a communications strategy focused on increasing our impact on policy and being the 'go to' voice on social justice.
- Identify strategies to achieve a wider and longer dissemination of core bodies of work, including the Socio-Economic Review and SDG Progress Review.

**Goal 3: To create and support structures and initiatives that will help achieve our vision and provide strength for the organisation in future years**

**To achieve this goal we will:**

- Continue to educate and train people in social policy so that they can play an effective role in policy development in arenas ranging from local organisations to national and international contexts, in particular by supporting the MA in Social
- Justice and Public Policy programme in the Waterford Institute of Technology.
- Strengthen our engagement in developing regional and rural policy.
- Strengthen our involvement with European and international Networks.
- Retain and deepen our strategic partnerships with a number of organisations.
- Promote a spirituality that supports and underpins the development of our vision of a just society.
- Support development of Public Participation Networks.

**Goal 4: To improve our organisational efficiency and ensure the long term organisational and financial sustainability of *Social Justice Ireland***

**To achieve this goal, we will:**

- Review all funding streams to ensure we are maximising potential income
- Build on the work done, supported by Persuasion Republic, to create a support base of high net worth individuals and attract other significant individual contributions
- Maintain and develop ongoing financial support from the religious orders and congregations
- Seek to increase our paying membership
- Continue to explore avenues to develop new streams of income
- Maintain a cohort of highly qualified salaried staff, with complementary skill sets, to carry out our work
- Avail of the support of volunteer specialists to contribute to our work
- Ensure we operate to best practice in human resource management
- Develop a fund, as a percentage of the overall salary bill, to support continuous professional development for staff
- Produce an annual report setting out what we have achieved under our various goals.
- Ensure that all *Social Justice Ireland* is a model of good practice in all areas of governance, including training as relevant, for all new or existing Board members to assist in the discharge of their duties.
- Continue to host an Advisory Academic Council which will meet from time to time to advise the Board on research and related matters being undertaken by the organisation. Members of this Council will be appointed by the Board.
- Retain offices appropriate to the delivery of this Strategic Plan.
- Continually monitor and evaluate the output and impact of the work undertaken by the organisation to enable us to be more accountable to members, donors and supporters and to demonstrate impact.

## Our Core Policy Expertise

*Social Justice Ireland* seeks to be a voice of expertise across 11 policy areas.

### **Income and Income Distribution**

To provide all with sufficient income to live life with dignity. This would require enough income to provide a minimum floor of social and economic resources in such a way as to ensure that no person in Ireland falls below the threshold of social provision necessary to enable him or her to participate in activities that are considered the norm for society generally.

### **Taxation**

To collect sufficient taxes to ensure full participation in society for all, through a fair tax system in which those who have more pay more, while those who have less pay less.

### **Work, Unemployment and Job Creation**

To ensure that all people have access to meaningful work

### **Housing and Accommodation**

To ensure that adequate and appropriate accommodation is available for all people and to develop an equitable system for allocating resources within the housing sector.

### **Healthcare**

To provide an adequate healthcare service focused on enabling people to attain the World Health Organisation's definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

### **Education**

To provide relevant education for all people throughout their lives, so that they can participate fully and meaningfully in developing themselves, their community and the wider society.

### **Public Services**

To ensure the provision of, and access to, a level of public services regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally

### **People and Participation**

To ensure that all people from different cultures are welcomed in a way that is consistent with our history, our obligations as world citizens and with our economic status.

To ensure that every person has a genuine voice in shaping the decisions that affect them and that every person can contribute to the development of society.

### **Sustainability**

To ensure that all development is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable

### Rural and Regional Development

To achieve balanced regional development, with a particular emphasis on providing the sustainable public services and employment opportunities required.

To secure the existence of substantial numbers of viable communities in all parts of rural Ireland where every person would have access to meaningful work, adequate income and social services, and where infrastructure needed for sustainable development would be in place.

### The Global South

To ensure that Ireland plays an active and effective part in promoting sustainable development in the Global South and to ensure that all of Ireland's policies are consistent with such development.

At all times seek to inculcate the core values of human dignity, sustainability, equality/human rights and the common good in all public policy decisions and to promote structures which enable these values to be developed in public policy.

## Our Seven Core Human Rights

The development and recognition of human rights has been one of the great achievements of the 20th century. In the 21st century human rights have moved beyond civil and political rights to embrace social, economic and cultural rights. In this context *Social Justice Ireland* believes that every person has seven core rights that should be part of our vision of the future i.e.

- the right to sufficient income to live life with dignity;
- the right to meaningful work;
- the right to appropriate accommodation;
- the right to relevant education;
- the right to essential healthcare;
- the right to real participation and
- the right to cultural respect.

Policy decisions should be moving towards the achievement of each of these rights. Care should be taken that decisions are not moving society or the economy in the opposite direction.